

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 17, 2016

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4909) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes:

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Chair, I rise in opposition to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 (H.R. 4909).

Each year, the National Defense Authorization Act provides a framework for our armed forces in the fiscal year ahead. Crafting and considering this legislation is a serious matter, one that has earned strong bipartisan support in the past. This year, House Republicans have instead decided to intentionally violate last year's Bipartisan Budget Act and abdicate this Congress' solemn responsibility to sufficiently fund our troops.

H.R. 4909 takes \$18 billion from Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO), the account that pays for our country's fight against ISIS and other important military efforts, in order to fund base budget items that the President and the Department of Defense have not requested. This funding shift breaks the spirit of the Bipartisan Budget Act reached last October and degrades our military's readiness. Furthermore, H.R. 4909 stops authorization for OCO funding next April, long before the fiscal year ends, and places our servicemen and -women squarely in the middle of a partisan budget fight just months into the next president's term. This is reckless and irresponsible, and Congress owes it to our troops to authorize a full year of funding.

H.R. 4909 also includes several disturbing Republican ideological stances that I find highly objectionable. This legislation fails to uphold President Obama's protections for LGBT Americans who work for federal contractors and grantees and allows for discrimination against them. This outrageous partisan rider has absolutely no place in a bill that authorizes the funds necessary for our servicemen and -women to do the jobs they have bravely volunteered to do. Additionally, H.R. 4909 once again includes provisions that prevent President Obama from responsibly closing the prison at Guantanamo Bay, ensuring that the detention center will remain an extremist propaganda tool and a threat to our national security. Now that President Obama has put forward a plan to close the detention center responsibly, Congress should move immediately to enact it. The closure of this facility is long overdue.

House Republicans owe it to our servicemen and -women to put forward legislation free from partisan ideological riders and adequately funds them for a full fiscal year. Unfortunately, H.R. 4909 falls far short of this.

quately funds them for a full fiscal year. Unfortunately, H.R. 4909 falls far short of this.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 (H.R. 4909).

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2017

SPEECH OF

HON. SUZANNE BONAMICI

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4974) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017, and for other purposes:

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Chair, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 4974, the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2017.

Although I strongly support the bill's funding for programs that support our nation's service members and veterans, the legislation contained too many harmful provisions to earn my vote. Regrettably, the bill included language allowing federal contractors to discriminate against LGBT employees, as well as language to prevent the closing of the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay. I was also concerned by the adoption of anti-labor amendments that will jeopardize the rights of workers on military construction projects.

Though I oppose the final bill for those reasons, there were several provisions in the legislation that I support, including greater investments in providing care to our veterans, and funding for military housing, infrastructure, and other services to give our men and women in uniform and their families the facilities and care they deserve. I hope to work with my colleagues to improve this legislation as the appropriations process continues.

DEMOCRACY IN CRISIS

SPEECH OF

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 23, 2016

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, tonight I rise with my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus to urge our Republican colleagues to stop their reckless assault on the right to vote in America.

First, let me thank my colleagues, Congresswoman JOYCE BEATTY and Congressman HAKEEM JEFFRIES, for organizing this important special order and for their dedicated leadership in ensuring equality and liberty for all.

I'd also like to thank Chairman G. K. BUTTERFIELD for his mighty leadership of our caucus as we work to ensure all Americans have an equal voice at the ballot box.

At the signing of the Voting Rights Act in 1965, President Johnson told the American people: "The vote is the most powerful instrument ever devised by man for breaking down injustice and destroying the terrible walls which imprison men because they are different from other men."

And Dr. King, our drum major for peace and justice, agreed saying: "Voting is the foundation stone for political action."

I am proud to say that we have come a long way in the 50 years since the signing of the Voting Rights Act. In April, the Supreme Court unanimously upheld "one person one vote" with its 8-0 ruling, in *Evenwel v. Abbott*. The ruling affirmed that legislative districts must continue to be drawn based on total population, not just the total number of voters. This will ensure that the concerns of all constituents will be equally represented.

However, we must confront the fact that our voting rights are once again under attack. There are many working to turn back the clock, so we must continue working to ensure that each man and woman has an equal voice at the ballot box.

We cannot allow the victories of the Civil Rights Movement to be undone.

In 2013, the Supreme Court opened the door to these voting rights attacks. In its *Shelby v. Holder* decision, the Court carelessly and callously gutted the milestone the Voting Rights Act.

In the three years following this ruling, we've watched Republican state legislatures fall over themselves to erect new and undemocratic barriers to the ballot box.

This year, 16 states instituted new restrictions for the first time.

Let me repeat—for the first time, during a presidential election year, 16 states instituted new voting restrictions. And the clearly partisan nature of these voting rights attacks is not lost on the American people.

These new barriers range from unnecessary voter ID laws, to ending same-day voter registration and reducing or completing eliminating early voting.

Since 2010, 21 states have implemented new restrictions.

Mr. Speaker, this is a crisis; our democracy is in crisis.

While states have put up barriers, Speaker RYAN, Judiciary Chairman GOODLATTE and some Congressional Republicans have ignored the clear, bipartisan conscience to fix the Voting Rights Act and restore voting rights protections for all Americans.

Republican Congressman JAMES SENSENBRENNER has introduced the bipartisan Voting Rights Amendment Act (H.R. 885), which I am proud to co-sponsor with 105 of my colleagues, including 14 Republican Members representing 11 different states.

But let me be clear—simply fixing the Voting Rights Act is not enough.

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